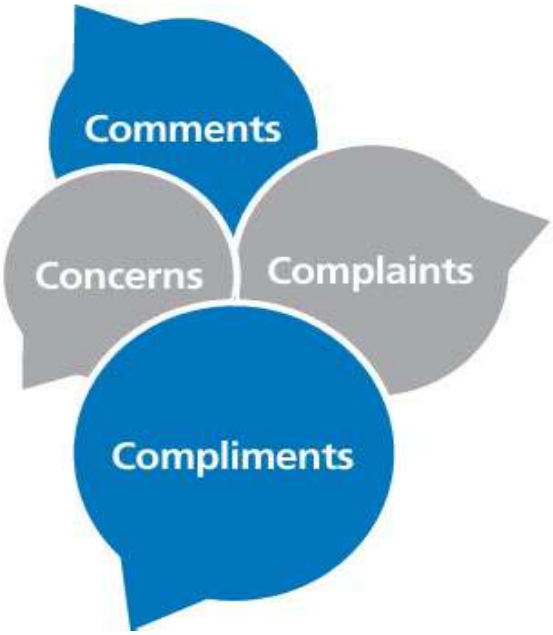
Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust



Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

Comments, compliments, concerns, or complaints
Freephone: 0800 328 7971

OH 042.25

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What does the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) do?

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality care and services for our patients but sometimes we don't get it right.

PALS can help you when you with:

- Advice or information.
- Support to sort out a local concern or problem quickly.
- The opportunity to make a compliment, comment or suggestion to improve our services.
- Help with raising a formal complaint.

PALS is a free and confidential service provided separately from clinical services.

You can use PALS if you are being seen by any of the Trust's services or if you are a friend or family member of someone who is using a service.

PALS offer advice and information about:

- Mental health issues generally.
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust services.
- Other NHS services and local community resources.
- How to make decisions about your care and treatment.
- How to sort out any problems, disagreements or misunderstandings.

Support

If you cannot sort out a problem with a Trust service on your own PALS can listen and help you to get your voice heard.

We are here to help you get the answers you need about:

- Why something has gone wrong.
- Why particular treatments may not be available or recommended.
- They can put you in contact with voluntary organisations, support groups and advocacy services.

PALS work closely with staff to make sure you get the information, advice and support you need.

If we cannot answer your question, we will put you in touch with someone who can help you.

Making a formal complaint: NHS complaints process

Why make a complaint?

Oxford Health NHS FT aims to provide the highest quality of health care.

We try hard to ensure that we meet the needs of all the people who come into contact with our services.

However, we know that there are times when we do not do this as well as we should.

When this happens, we want to know so that we can listen to your views and learn from your experiences.

Who can complain?

Anyone using the trust's services can make a complaint or raise a concern.

If you are raising concerns on behalf of someone who has received care from us, then we will need to ask their permission to share with you any confidential and personal information.

Will my complaint be kept confidential?

We will handle your complaint sensitively and confidentially.

Please be assured by raising a concern it will not affect the care that you or your relative is given.

If this happens, we would like you to tell the complaints and PALS service manager so that we can take the necessary action.

What is the time limit for making a complaint?

If you would like to make a complaint, you should do this as quickly as possible.

Usually, we will investigate complaints that are:

- made within 12 months of the event, or
- made within 12 months of you realising you had something to complain about.

If there are good reasons why you could not complain sooner, then we will do our best to look into your complaint.

If we feel it is still possible to properly investigate the circumstances you are complaining about.

If you are unsure about whether you are still able to make a complaint, then the complaints team would be happy to discuss this with you.

How can I make a complaint?

Early resolution

If you wish to make a complaint, we suggest that you firstly discuss your concerns with a member of staff from the team you are receiving a service from.

They will do their best to deal with your concerns or complaint straight away.

We usually try and respond to oral complaints informally either by telephone or a face-to-face conversation.

Formal complaints

If you prefer, you can make a formal complaint to the complaints and PALS service manager or to the chief executive.

Wherever possible, we ask for formal complaints to be made in writing.

This helps us to understand all of the issues you are raising.

If you would like to discuss your complaint or need help in making your complaint, then please contact the complaints team on the freephone number 0800 328 7971 who will be happy to assist you.

Making sure you have help and support

If you would like help making your complaint, then you should contact our local NHS advocacy provider.

Their service is free. They are independent and they are there to help you every step of the way.

See the useful contacts section for details of your local advocacy service.

What can I expect when I make a formal complaint?

A member of the complaints team will be assigned to look after your complaint.

They will contact you either in writing or by telephone within three working days of receiving your complaint to introduce themselves and to let you know what will happen.

You can contact this person at any time during the complaints process should you need to.

The complaints team will also arrange for a senior clinician or manager from within the Trust to work with you to look into your concerns.

This person will try to contact you at the onset of their investigation to discuss your concerns in more detail.

We will try to investigate your complaint as quickly as possible.

Some issues need more time than others for an investigation to be carried out properly.

Where possible, we will try to reply to your complaint within 35 working days from the date your letter was received by the Trust.

When we have finished our investigations, the chief executive or one of the Trust's directors will write to you to answer your concerns in an open and honest manner and will put things right as soon as possible.

What if I am still not happy?

If you are unhappy, then we would like you to tell us so that we can try and resolve the issues you feel we have not answered.

However, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you may ask the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to review your complaint.

The PHSO's contact details are in the useful contacts section and for more information please ask the complaints team.

You are also able to raise any concerns with the quality or safety of care received to the independent health and social care regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Contact details are in the useful contact's section.

Useful contacts

At the Trust

Call us on 0800 3287971

Email us at PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Grant Macdonald
Chief Executive Officer
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Littlemore Mental Health Centre
Sandford Road, Littlemore
Oxford, OX4 4XN
Telephone: 01865 901 000

Claire Price
Complaints & PALS Service Manager
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
The Whiteleaf Centre
Bierton Road, Aylesbury
Bucks, HP20 1EG
Freephone: 0800 328 7971
Email: pals@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Outside the Trust

Advocacy Services offer a free and confidential advocacy service to people who have a complaint about the NHS and would like some support.

Advocacy services covering your areas are as follows.

VoiceAbility (Oxfordshire, Swindon & Wiltshire)
Telephone: 300 303 1660
Website: www.voiceability.org.

The Advocacy People (Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes)
Telephone: 0330 440 9000
Website: www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk.

The Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
30 Millbank
London, SW1P 4QP
Complaints helpline: 0345 015 4033
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Care Quality Commission
151 Buckingham Palace Rd
Victoria
London, SW1 9SZ
Telephone: 03000 616 161
Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk Website: www.cqc.org.uk

Accessibility

An accessible version of this leaflet can be found on our website: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets

Get in touch

Address	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Trust Headquarters Littlemore Mental Health Centre Sandford Road, Oxford OX4 4XN
Phone	01865 901 000
Email	enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
Website	www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

Phone	0800 328 7971
Email	PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Become a member of our foundation trust: **www.ohftnhs.uk/membership**

Support Oxford Health Charity, making a difference to patients, their families and staff who care for them: **www.oxfordhealth.charity**